

constitution, all 1,100 words. And, for those of you that have not read that part of our constitution lately, I would like to have you do that, especially those of you that talk about what we want in our constitution, good law. I think if you read through that, you will find that what is currently in our constitution, the longest amendment that is in our constitution is not something that is necessarily good policy or good law. No other state has the restrictive policies when it comes to corporate agriculture farming that the State of Nebraska does in its constitution. We're the only state in the union that puts it in our constitution. A couple of facts that I would like to have you look at and keep in mind is that when we look at what Initiative 300 was passed, in the first place, neither the actual ballot summary nor the amendment itself contains the familiar Preamble of Public Purpose incorporated within most state legislation. That leaves us still asking why Initiative 300 because it was never really identified. But a review of the hearings and campaign literature identify probably three objectives telling us what the legislation was meant to accomplish, what its objectives were. Probably one of those that was most highly promoted was to protect the small family farms from unfair competition which would result from the concentration of farmland owned by large corporations. I would ask you to turn to some statistics from the Department of Agriculture that tells us that in 1982...in 1980, we had 65,000 farms, small family farms. In 1994, we had 55,000 farms. And the average size per farm, in 1980, was 734 acres. In 1994, it was 256 acres, which says we're getting less and we're getting bigger. There is also a breakdown, county by county, that tells you about the retention of family farms. There are only three counties in the State of Nebraska that managed not to lose farms. They managed to hold just what they had. Nobody gained. And I would like to have you look through that and also look in your counties and those counties you represent what's happening to the number of farms in your county. The other thing that I think is a very big factor, when we look at farming and why family farms can continue to exist, is what's called off-farm income. Those are those farms that are in operation but that have to rely on other income to stay in business. In 1981, there was 55...or \$553 million that was needed in off-farm income. In 1990, that figure is in excess of a billion dollars. We will continue to work with entities out there to try to provide information that we think...and education that is needed, to be able to look at what is impacting the largest industry in our state, which is agriculture. There are many of